

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-8 and 10-13 are presently active in this case. Claims 2, 3 and 12 have been amended and claim 1 has been cancelled by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-8 and 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,310,956 to Morito et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,965,680 to Endoh.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesy of an interview granted to Applicants' attorney on January 22, 2004 at which time the outstanding issues regarding the above-identified application were discussed. No agreement was reached. However, as discussed during the interview, Applicants have changed the conditional language "if" to -- when-- in the "wherein" paragraphs of the independent claims. Hence, the extremely broad interpretation of the respective "wherein" paragraphs of the independent claims is no longer believed appropriate.

The present invention is directed to an information processing method wherein the duplication of content is prohibited when an interval of time between the current time and the time of a prior duplication of the content specified by temporal data stored in a database is less than a predetermined amount of time.

Morito et al disclose that recording of digital data is prevented if the time difference between the transmission time, which is embedded in the digital data, and current time is greater than a threshold value. However, Morito et al do not disclose prohibiting the duplication of the content when a predetermined amount of time has not passed since the same content was duplicated. Moreover, unlike in Morito et al., in the present invention the temporal data is not embedded into the content, but rather is stored in a database.

Endoh is not believed to address the deficiencies of Morito et al. That is, Endoh does not disclose or suggest the prohibition feature of the present invention or that temporal data governing the prohibition is stored in a database. Therefore, Morito et al are not believed to anticipate or render obvious the subject matter defined by the present claims when considered alone or in combination with Endoh.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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